

PROGRAMME (6) - The Commonwealth Immigrants' Act

NARR:

Hello boys and girls,

You remember last week we had a very distinguished Guianese talking to us - Mr. Tdd Braithwaite. Now you may remember that one of the things he told us was this: He went to England twenty six years ago to study, to get a good education, as we say. And you know, Mr. Braithwaite is only one of many, many Guianese who have left Guiana and gone to England to study. But some +Guianese as well as West Indians - Jamaicans, Barbadians Trinidadians and so on, --Beth go to England not to study but to get jobs; to see if they can work there.

Now why is this? Why do so many West Indian[?] and Guianese leave these warm countries to live in a cold one. I think you know some of the answers already. For one thing jobs are not always easy to get in the West Indies. You can almost say that there are too many people asking for too few jobs - or to use the big word, there's unemployment. Then there's another thing. A man may get a job but he may find that the wages are so low that he can't live comfortably on them - in other words he has to spend more on his family than he earns. Well one way out of these two difficulties is to ^{try to} get to a country where there are a lot of jobs - and jobs that pay well. And ever since about 1950 stores of West Indians have gone to England to work and to live there. But why did they choose England? Why did they not choose the United States or Canada? After all these

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But in 1962 difficulties began to arise. The British Government decided that it might not be safe to go on allowing immigrants to come in without special permission. You see in Britain many people argued this way. They said "Things are all right now - there are lots of jobs and West Indian Immigrants and immigrants from other Commonwealth Countries can find things to do. But suppose things change. Suppose Britain became less prosperous. Then they would be fewer jobs and the immigrants would be as badly off in England as they were in their own countries." Other people looked at it this way. They said " In England a sick man gets ~~the~~ free medical care: if you don't have a job you can get some money every week to help you and your family." Well they said, if ~~the~~ immigrants keep on coming in large numbers very soon they will not be enough jobs for them. And then they will have to live off the dole - that's what you call the money an unemployed man gets every week. So the British Government began thinking that it must slow down the number of immigrants entering Britain. Of course the West Indian Governments said that this was unfair. Many people in England thought it was unfair too. Some people said that England had once ruled these countries, had become prosperous by ruling them and so she should allow immigrants from them to work in England.

Any way the British Government in 1962 passed a law - by this law if an immigrant wanted to go to England he had to show a certificate when he reached England. How would he get this certificate? Well

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are much bigger countries and they do have more jobs. But you see boys and girls the United States and Canada all this time only allowed a certain number of people to enter each year. If say in 1955 you wanted to go to the United States, you couldn't just buy a plane ticket and fly off to New York. No. You would have to apply for a permit - called a visa - and if you were given then you could go. And the same thing was true of Canada. The Canadian Government has to give you permission to live in Canada.

Now up to 1962 as long as you came from one of the Commonwealth countries, you could just buy a plane ticket or a boat ticket and go to England. Nobody would stop you. And when you add to this that there were quite a number of jobs in England that West Indians could do, then you can see why so many people from the West Indies went to England. But it wasn't only West Indians who were going to England. There were people from Pakistan, India, Ceylon and Africa. You see in all of these places jobs are just as hard to get as in the West Indies and since Pakistanis, Indians, Ceylonese and some Africans were Commonwealth citizens went to England most of them got jobs there. Some of the jobs they got were the ones that people in England didn't like doing. Take for example, the job of Bus Conductor. A Bus Conductor has to stand for long hours in the bus collecting money. It's a strain. But it was noticed that West Indians did this kind of job very well and very cheerfully and very carefully.

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suppose he had written to a friend in England and the friend had got him a job. If he could show that he was going to a job then he would be allowed to enter. Or if he was going to ~~spend~~ study in a College or School that had had already admitted him then he could get a certificate. Or if a woman was going to join her husband who was already in England then she would be admitted. And to make sure that no one would be given a certificate without the things we've mentioned, an officer of the British Government ~~called-~~ called an entry officer was sent to work in the countries from which the immigrants came. And unless he gives you a certificate it would be very unwise for you to try to go to England, because you would be sent back.

So you see boys and girls, leaving your country nowadays to go to live in another, is no easy business. The fares are expensive. But apart from that you have to be permitted to enter other countries. You may have heard recently of a Guianese family that was sent back home, because ~~it~~ felt that they didn't have the qualifications to enter Britain. This may have the effect of making many Guianese think twice before going away and it may be a good thing in the long run for Guiana. Why? Because Guiana needs all her people to remain home or to come back home after completing their studies. It's not only the more the merrier. It's the more Guianese at home the more Guiana will be a better place to live in.

So long boys and girls.

OPR:

PLAY THEME: